

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NASSAU 1003

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT,NBF
SUBJ: ELECTIONS

REFS: NASSAU 0960 AND PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY: WITH SHADES OF T.S. ELIOT THE BAHAMIAN
GENERAL ELECTION OF 1977 IS ENDING NOT WITH A BANG BUT A
WHIMPER. THE PRIME MINISTER AT A PLP RALLY LAST NIGHT
CUT SHORT A PREPARED SPEECH, DECLARED HIS PARTY TO HAVE
ALREADY WON ANYWAY, AND SPEND THE REST OF HIS ALLOTTED
TIME INSTRUCTING THE CROWD ON VOTING PROCEDURES. AT THE
SAME TIME A SPARSELY ATTENDED OPPOSITION MEETING ORGANIZED
BY THE FNM GROUND TO A HALT AFTER THE LIGHTING AND PUBLIC
ADDRESS SYSTEM FAILED, THE SPEAKER WAS DROWNED OUTBY
SINGING AND PRAYING EMANATING FROM A NEARBY CHURCH, AND
THE CROWD WAS THREE TIMES DESTRUCTED: FIRST BY A FIST
FIGHT BETWEEN TWO TEEN-AGE GIRLS, SECOND BY THE APPEARANCE
ON THE SCENE OF A LARGE PACK OF STRAY AND BARKING DOGS AND
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FINALLY BY THE SIGHTING OF AN ENORMOUS RAT ON THE PODIUM
WHICH PROVOKED THE FEW HANGERS ON TO GIVE CHASE THUS ENDING
THE AFFAIR. THE PLP ENTERED THE LAST WEEK OF CAMPAIGNING
WITH A SAFE MARGIN AND THEIR CLEVER MANIPULATION OF INDEPENDENCE
DAY ACTIVITIES PLUS THE INVENTIVE USE OF NEWLY INAUGURATED
AND STATE CONTROLLED BAHAMIAN TELEVISION HAS, IN OUR OPINION,
TRANSFORMED THAT MARGIN INTO A COMFORTABLE ONE. THE

DIVIDED OPPOSITION REMAINS DEVIDED AND DESPITE OCCASIONAL CONCILIATORY GESTURES, AS OPPOSED TO EACH OTHER AS TO THE PLP. WHILE THERE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE SOME UPSETS WE CONTINUE TO PREDICT A PLP CONTROLLED HOUSE AFTER THE VOTES ARE COUNTED NEXT TUESDAY.

2. THE PLP'S BASIC STRATEGY FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN: TO STRESS ITS EXPERIENCE (IF NOT COMPETENCE) IN GOVERNING AS CONTRASTED WITH THE OPPOSITIONS INEXPERIENCE; TO PAINT THE OPPOSITION BDP AS THE PUPPET OF THE FORMER WHITE CONTROLLED UBP; AND TO SPREAD THE IMAGE OF FNM LEADER WALLACE-WHITFIELD AS A RUTHLESS WOULD BE TYRANT SURROUND BY POWER-MAD SYCOPHANTS. CHARGES OF ALLEGED CORRUPTION IN ITS OWN RANKS HAS BEEN IGNORED AND THE PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT HAS BEEN EVASIVELY DEALT WITH BY VAGUE PROMISES TO BE REALIZED SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE. TO THIS BASE HAS BEEN ADDED A MIXTURE OF COMPLETING PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS IN KEY CONSTITUENCIES, TURNING INDEPENDENCE DAY INTO A HOMAGE TO THE PLP AND MANIPULATING THE NEWLY INAUGURATED TELEVISION BROADCASTING TO ITS OWN ADVANTAGE. THE FIRST WAS NEITHER UNEXPECTED NOR UNCOMMON, AND THE SECOND WAS NOT DIFFICULT TO ACCOMPLISH AS IT WAS, AFTER ALL, THE PLP WHICH PUSHED FOR AND ACHIEVED INDEPENDENCE. (SOME MIGHT WONDER HOWEVER WHETHER THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE HONOR'S LIST, BAHAMIAN SECTION, WAS NOT PERHAPS OVERLY PADDED WITH PLP SUPPORTERS RATHER THAN WORTHY CONTRIBUTORS TO THE CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMON GOOD.)

3. AS FOR THE LATTER, BAHAMIANS HAVE SEEN NIGHTLY, SINCE THE TENTH OF THIS MONTH, WHAT THE PLP GOVERNMENT HAS ACCOMPLISHED OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS THANKS TO SPECIALLY PRODUCED DOCUMENTARY FILMS PAID FOR BY THE GOVERNMENT WHICH ARE IN FACT NOTHING MORE THAN HOULY PAEANS IN LIVING COLOR TO THE PINDLING GOVERNMENT. VIEWERS ARE NOT SO SUBTLY REMINDED TOO - THANKS TO THE AIRING OF ALEX HALEY'S "ROOTS" - OF THE INJUSTICES OF THT PAST AND THE FACT THAT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES BENEFITING THE GREAT MAJORITY OF BAHAMIANS HAVE INDEED OCCURRED DURING THE TENURE IN OFFICE OF THE NATION'S FIRST BLACK GOVERNMENT. I WAS TOLD BY PM PINDLING AT DINNER ON MONDAY THAT HE EXPECTS TO TAKE TWENTY-EIGHT OF THE THIRTY-EIGHT SEATS IN THE NEW HOUSE. WHILE I AM NOT CONVINCED OF THE ACCURACY OF THAT FIGURE I AM CERTAIN THAT HIS CONFIDENCE WAS IN NO WAY FEIGNED.

4. THE OPPOSITION AND THE INDEPENDENTS HAVE FAILED TO KEEP UP THE MOMENTUM DEMONSTRATED PRIOR TO THE JULY TENTH INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS AND THERE IS LITTLE POSSIBILITY THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE IN THE NEXT SIX DAYS

TO REGENERATE THE ENTHUSIASM NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE A COMBINED MAJORITY IN THE HOUSE. THERE WILL NEVERTHELESS BE CONSIDERABLE MORE OPPOSITION MEMBERS IN THE NEXT HOUSE AND THERE WILL MOST PROBABLY BE SOME SIGNIFICANT UPSETS. WE ARE RELIABLY INFORMED THAT INCUMBENT MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION, CLEMENT MAYNARD, IS IN SERIOUS TROUBLE AND MAY WELL BE DEFEATED. (IN SUCH AN EVENT HE WOULD BE AN IDEAL CANDIDATE TO REPLACE AMBASSADOR L. B. JOHNSON WHO THE PRIME MINISTER TELLS ME WILL BE RESIGNING IN TWO WEEKS.) LIKEWISE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND ATTORNEY GENERAL PAUL ADDERLEY IS EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES WITH HIS CAMPAIGN DUE LARGELY TO HIS INABILITY TO RELATE TO NON-CONTAB TYPES WHO ARE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN IN CARMICHAEL. THIS IS DOUBLY UNFORTUNATE AS A VICTORY WOULD ENABLE HIM TO

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TAKE OVER THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE FOR WHICH IS ABLY SUITED AND ALLOW FOR NEW BLOOD AT EXTERNAL AFFAIRS WHICH COULD, FROM OUT POINT OF VIEW, NOT HELP BUT BE AN IMPROVEMENT.

5. OUR PREDICTED SCENARIO FOR THE POST ELECTION PERIOD IS AN EXTENDED VACATION FOR BOTH VICTORS AND LOSERS WITH A NEW CABINET NOT BEING FORMED UNTIL MID-AUGUST AT THE EARLIEST. IN ADDITION TO THE PROBLEM OF FAMILIARIZATION FOR NEW MINISTERS THE BUDGET SUBMISSION WILL BE THE FIRST PRIORITY FOR ALL AND ITS PREPARATION WILL ALLOW LITTLE TIME FOR ANY OTHER DECISIONS AT LEAST THROUGH LATE SEPTEMBER. THE HOUSE WILL NOT BE CONVENED UNTIL OCTOBER 19TH TO COINCIDE WITH THE QUEEN'S VISIT AND NO REAL BUSINESS WILL BE TRANSACTED UNTIL NOVEMBER. THUS WE WILL MOST LIKELY BE RECEIVING A LETTER NEXT DECEMBER 31ST ONCE MORE EXTENDING THE FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS FOR ANOTHER SIX MONTHS AND CAN EXPECT A LONG WAIT BEFORE BEGINNING TALKS ON FISHERIES BOUNDARIES AS WELL AS AN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AGREEMENT ALTHOUGH WITH REGARD TO THE LATTER WE SEEM TO BE EXPERIENCING OUR OWN INTERNAL BUREAUCRATIC DELAYS.

TAYLOR

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